

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA :

14 Cr. 68 (KBF)

- against - :

ROSS ULBRICHT, :

Defendant. :

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## EXHIBIT 2

LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANT ROSS ULBRICHT

Joshua L. Dratel  
JOSHUA L. DRATEL, P.C.  
29 Broadway, Suite 1412  
New York, New York 10006  
(212) 732 - 0707  
jdratel@joshuadratel.com

*Attorneys for Defendant Ross Ulbricht*

*– Of Counsel –*

Joshua L. Dratel  
Lindsay A. Lewis

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# LETTER 1



April 16, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am Ross Ulbricht's mother. I write to entreat you to give my son the shortest possible sentence, which is still very long. I ask this not simply because I love Ross dearly or that his arrest and incarceration have shattered our family. I sincerely ask because I am certain that Ross does not require a severely long sentence to be corrected and learn to abide by the law. In fact I am confident that if Ross were released today he would obey the law for the rest of his life. He is an intelligent person and a fast learner. He has learned some terribly hard lessons, and learned them well. He is not someone who would be prone to repeat his behavior in any way. I know he regrets his actions very deeply, not only for the severe consequences he is suffering and the terrible grief and hardship he has caused his family, but for any harm he may have caused others.

Despite his conviction, it is telling that Ross has no prior arrests or offenses. He has lived most of his life well within the law and has never been known to threaten or endanger anyone. There is not a violent or cruel bone in his body. Quite the contrary, he is known to be philanthropic, honest and compassionate. He has never been motivated by greed, money or power. Rather, when he created Silk Road, Ross was a young idealist who was passionate about the concept of personal and economic freedom. He wanted to convince others of the ideas he was caught up in. To that end he created an open, free market website with few restrictions. This was a rebellious act and I don't justify it. Nor would I ever defend Silk Road. I simply ask that you consider his young age and his motivations, which I believe were political and, from his immature view, humanitarian.



We all know that young people can be foolishly reckless and often blind to the destructive ramifications of their choices. They are often influenced by ideas and impulses that, once older and more mature, they would never consider. Parents hope that their children grow past those foolhardy years without hurting themselves or others. In the normal course of events they mature and move on unscathed. In some cases their choices lead to disastrous results. I think this was true in Ross' case. I believe he allowed his rash, youthful idealism and zeal to take him into areas and choices he shouldn't have made, and normally wouldn't have, and it got out of hand. Again, this not to excuse Ross of any crimes he has been convicted of, but to say that, now 31 and chastened by his imprisonment, he has matured and will continue to do so. Growing older and learning hard lessons have a way of doing that.

You had the opportunity to sit across the courtroom from Ross for almost a month. You know that the entire time, even when the devastating verdict was read, he conducted himself with dignity and equilibrium. He was unerringly respectful to the court and the people handling him. This is not an incorrigible criminal. This is someone who is civilized, ready to cooperate and endure what he must in the hopes of returning to society as a law abiding citizen. It is someone who can be corrected within the least amount of time allowed. More than that is far greater than necessary.

My son Ross has been a joy to raise and a blessing to friends, family and strangers. As his mother, he has been a son to be proud of. I have been told countless times of his compassion, integrity and commitment to truth and good deeds. His former housemate tells of how, while out walking with him, Ross suddenly dashed off to help an old homeless woman cross the street. He bought flowers for the flower lady on the corner, because he figured nobody did that for her. When he went to a sophisticated New York party he told me he spent most of it outside talking to a homeless man. It is so typical of Ross to help the helpless, encourage the outcast, reach out to people.

In prison Ross has been a great boon to fellow inmates. Now at MCC, he's tutoring some of them in math and science. He tutored his cellmate for his GED in the evenings after trial. At MDC he led a physics class and a yoga class. His former cellmate (now released) wrote me to say what a positive influence Ross had been on him. An MDC guard took me aside and literally gushed about what a wonderful person Ross is and what an asset he was to the environment there.

Through this ordeal Ross has had the unwavering support of friends and family – the people who actually know him. Many of them, although not wealthy, pledged their homes, life savings and other assets for his bail without hesitation. Seventeen offered to co-sign the bond. This was because they know Ross is trustworthy and because they love him. A reporter said that he was struggling to find anyone to say anything negative about Ross. Not one person who knows him has reported anything unfavorable about him or anything that would imply violent or criminal behavior.

Despite his recent conviction, Ross Ulbricht is an exceptionally kind, generous, caring and high minded individual. I am not saying he hasn't made grievous mistakes. I am saying that he has already well learned to never repeat them. I am certain that any thinking in Ross that led him to break the law has been corrected. The job of rehabilitation is accomplished. The job of punishment is up to the court. When deciding what this will be, I implore you to consider his fundamental character as conveyed in letters from those who have known him for years, some his entire life. Please also consider Ross' age; his personal history; his repentant attitude; and what he can contribute if allowed to do so.

Even with the shortest possible sentence, Ross will lose what are the most productive, rewarding and important years of his life. I beseech you to make his sentence no longer than necessary and give Ross the chance to rectify his mistakes. Please allow him time to re-join society as a reformed and chastened individual, who still has much to offer to his community.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lyn Ulbricht". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lyn Ulbricht



## **LETTER 2**

  
April 19, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I'm Ross Ulbricht's father. I was a home builder in Austin Texas for many years. Before that I worked for a US Industries subsidiary, Diversicon, as a project engineer. We built freeways in Florida. Now I own and operate a vacation rental home business in Costa Rica with my wife, Lyn Ulbricht, Ross' mother.

In my research of the sentencing phase of the judicial process, I have read that judges always want to know "why did the guilty individual commit the crime?". I believe I know what motivated Ross to do what he did, and I hope I can shed some light on that issue for you. I also hope to give you a fuller picture of the character of the young man you will be sentencing.

Ross has always been a thoughtful and inquisitive person. When he was a toddler, we noticed that he was never the type of child who would do foolish things, like running out into the street. He was measured in his actions, and mindful of their consequences. At first he seemed timid to me, but then I came to understand that he was thoughtful beyond his years.

As his character developed, he became what I can only describe as a "good" child. He was never in trouble in school. He was always obedient and willing to help at home. He was unselfish and kind to other kids.

Ross is an Eagle Scout, and so am I. There was an incident while he was a boy scout which illuminates Ross character. One of the kids in the troop was almost completely blind. He could only see dim shapes, and walked with a cane with the help of someone at his arm. He was being mainstreamed in school and in scouts. He and his parents wanted him to do everything the other kids did, and he was able to do almost everything, as long as he had another person at his side. There were a few of the kids who were always helping out as his companion. Ross was one of them, even though Ross was younger.

When our troop went to Philmont Scout Ranch for summer camp in the Pecos Wilderness, the blind boy, I'll call him Bill, went with us. Bill's dad came too. The challenge was for the 25 boys and five adults to hike 50 miles of rough Rocky Mountain trails, carrying all their food and camping gear for six days on their backs. Since Bill couldn't see the ground except vaguely, and he had a 30-pound pack, he was at a severe disadvantage. Even though he had a scout in front of him and his dad behind, on the first day he fell down hard five times. We all loved Bill and his dad, and wanted him to succeed, but that night I was sure he would have to give up.

The next day, some other scouts joined him as his trail companions. The boys would rotate in and out of being Bill's trail companion several times a day. It meant leaving early, arriving late, and hiking at Bills slow pace instead of hiking with the leaders of the main group, but there was a group of five boys who did it. Ross was one of them. Bill never made it through a day without falling at least twice, but he never gave up. His trail mates kept him from any more bad falls after the first day.

As we were walking into base camp on the sixth day, I walked a few hundred yards in front of

Bill, so he couldn't hear me kicking the loose rocks off the trail in front of him. Ross joined me, and we walked along kicking rocks aside with tears of pride and joy falling down our faces. Bill was going to complete the hike with the rest of his buddies. At the closing campfire that night, our troop's scoutmaster got up to tell of Bill's accomplishment. During the week, word of what was happening in our troop had spread throughout the other 500 scouts who were on their own difficult 50-mile hikes. When the whole group stood and roared out their approval of Bill's accomplishment there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd. Ross never got or sought any particular praise for his part in Bill's triumph, but that's the kind of guy he is, compassionate and selfless.

Ross did well in math and science in high school, and earned a full scholarship to the University of Texas. He majored in physics, and worked on the development of new materials for use in solar cells. When he graduated from UT with a Bachelor's in physics, he had earned a full scholarship to Penn State. While there, he continued to work on the development of new thin film materials with novel uses, and got his Masters degree in Material Science.

During his college years, Ross had developed a strong desire to use his talents to make a positive difference in the world. He rightly felt that he had the potential to do something good for mankind. He was offered a scholarship to continue his work on thin film materials at Cornell University while seeking a PhD.

Ross was at a significant turning point in his life. Along the way, he had become more interested in economic theory and free markets than he was in material science. He felt that a move to Cornell and a PhD in Material Science would take him away from economics and leave him with limited employment opportunities. Material Science PhD's have one principle job opportunity, to work in academia. He chose to become an entrepreneur, and planned to market a couple of ideas he had developed.

The first idea was to solicit donations of unwanted books that people typically have on their shelves. Ross formed a company with another budding entrepreneur to collect and then sell these books. Ten percent of profits would go to charity. Books would also be donated to prison libraries. The company operated at a small profit. When the entire stock of over 20,000 books on interconnecting shelving tragically collapsed, the venture was abandoned and sold.

While in college, Ross had played several mass-participant internet games. Some of these games have millions of clients and are complex enough to include virtual economies. Ross had noticed that these virtual economies did not function properly and were a bone of contention with the game participants. He had an idea that he could fix this problem by using a free market based economic model. He proceeded to create a program which would change the economy of some of the biggest internet virtual games from a Keynesian to an Austrian economic model. This was a large undertaking, and consumed Ross' energy for a couple of years. The result was a plug in type generic program that could be inserted into an existing mass-participant virtual reality game. The object was to show the games' owners how a free market economy would make the game more exciting, compelling, and end the persistent problems.

Then he began to look for a buyer for his product. Unfortunately, Ross was never able to convince any of the major game operators that the added value of his economic program would be worth the effort and expense to change the existing games' entire economy. He came close, but in the end his efforts came to naught. Interestingly, today, the most successful of those games use free market economic models, exactly as Ross had envisioned.

And so, Judge Forrest, given the frustration of the book business, and failed attempt to market his game economy program, plus his drive to succeed, the stage was set for the creation of the Silk Road. With some readily available information about bitcoin and the Tor Network, Ross was able to shift from a program that ran the economy of a virtual game to a program that ran a free market on the

internet.

It was a terrible decision. I would give anything I have to be able to go back in time and have the opportunity to counsel Ross on the inevitable outcome of his decision. Please Judge Forrest, consider that he was only 26 when he started the project to create Silk Road. He was a young idealistic man who was driven to succeed and to do good works. When he was in his early twenties he was either in college doing theoretical work for the betterment of mankind or working a book-selling business with a significant charitable component. His study of economic theory was done with the intention of using his knowledge to better the common condition of all of us. His idealism led him to implement a free market website. His naiveté and the folly of youth blinded him to the consequences.

The Silk Road was created in the hopes that something good would come of it. As history has shown, it quickly spiraled out of control. I know Ross regrets the decision to launch and operate the website. He has told me that in our visits to him in prison. I have seen a very pronounced change in his attitude toward life in general, and in particular to the law, and the consequences of breaking the law. He is a very different person now than he was before his arrest. The experience of a year and a half in prison has matured him more than 15 years of life on the outside would have.

Judge Forrest, please consider that the illegal aspects of Ross' Silk Road experiment represents a complete departure from the trajectory of his life. Please consider that Ross shared an old house and lived like a grad student when he was arrested. He didn't start the Silk Road out of greed. Money was never a motivating factor for him. He did it because he had an idealistic vision of freedom for all of us. Just as the French Revolution was born of an idealistic idea of freedom, and then became a nightmare that consumed its founders, so reads the story of the Silk Road.

Please consider the potential that Ross still has to contribute to society. His desire to contribute still exists. It is tempered with a respect for the law that this experience has added to his character. He can still be a good citizen of the United States. He can still be a contributor to the benefit of us all. Please give him the shortest sentence possible. His life as well as his potential to contribute is in your hands.

Respectfully,



Kirk Ulbricht



# **LETTER 3**



April 21, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York,  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street, New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am Ross' sister and I work for a medical equipment company as a Territory Sales Manager in Sydney, Australia. I'm writing on behalf of my brother, to beg you to apply the minimum sentence, which in itself will be most of his productive life. Through visits and phone conversations I can tell my brother is already a changed man. I truly believe he was idealistic, with an unrealistic view of how the world works. He felt he was offering an opportunity that had never existed before. His mindset and ideals have drastically shifted, as he has had time to think about his actions in the past 19 months. He is truly sorry, and I know will never go against the law again.

Our family is extremely close, and Ross is seeing the suffering this is causing us. Many friends and family travelled across country, and I from Australia, to support Ross through the trial. He would never intentionally hurt us, and I know he would do anything to reverse what he did. Please give him a chance to have at least some life once this nightmare ends.

Following are examples of who my brother is as a person, and why I implore you to apply the least amount of years to his sentence.

**Compassion:** Growing up we always had pets: dogs, cats, fish, hamsters. If stray dogs appeared in the neighbourhood, Ross and I would always take them in, care for them and find their owners. More than one unwanted dog became beloved family pets.

**Accepting:** Ross' qualities of empathy and compassion have extended to people throughout his life. He has always accepted everyone, no matter their race, station in life or status. One example is his membership in an African drum group in grad school. He was the only white person in the group, but he was instantly welcomed. That is because Ross sees people for who they are, not what's on the outside. He cares about people and wants to help improve their lives, be it through music, philosophy discussions or acts of kindness. Even as a child Ross especially felt for the underdogs, the kids who did not have many friends. His sympathetic nature reached out to them, so they felt wanted and part of the group. This continued into adulthood.

**Caring and considerate:** Ross' gentle nature as a child only blossomed when he was older. Several of his girlfriends (whom I have met) have told me what a gentleman Ross is, bringing flowers and chocolates, always opening doors for them. One time, when we were out with our cousins, it was relentlessly raining and we were stranded, waiting to get the car. Without a word Ross dashed out and ran through the rainstorm to get the car, getting soaked to the bone. Ross is a gentleman through and through.



A recent example of his generosity and caring occurred at MCC when, after exhausting days at trial, Ross tutored his cell mate in the evenings to help him pass his GED. He is the man other inmates come to when they've placed a bet, to measure their opponent's push-ups and ensure the other person does not cheat. Ross is known to be an honest man, even in jail.

A prison guard at MDC went out of her way to tell my parents what a wonderful man she thinks Ross is. During visiting hours, another inmate told my mother that Ross "is a good man and I'm watching out for him." Even in the lowest and worst situations, my brother focuses on the positive and aims to make the environment around him a better space. He will continue to do this once out of prison, too. He was raised to be a kind and sweet man. He would never intentionally hurt anyone. I know people can change, but I don't believe their core values do.

**Positive upbringing:** We grew up in a very peaceful, loving household, with no computer/video games or cable TV. Instead we played with neighborhood friends, making-up games, climbing trees, riding bikes. Ross was always such an easy-going child that he would befriend everyone and we had a great group of friends. We are still in touch with them, and you will receive several letters attesting to Ross' character from them as well.

**Team player:** Growing-up Ross was a boy scout and achieved Eagle. Becoming an Eagle Scout is not an easy task. To that end he gave up personal time, which is very important to high school students. This shows that even then he was committed to learning, growing and spending time with our father. When most young men are testing their masculinity, Ross was never in any fights in or out of school. He learned how to take care of himself in a peaceful manner. My father and Ross spent many camping trips and weekends with the troop. Unfortunately, many boys are not lucky enough to spend so much time with their fathers, learning about survival but also learning how to be a good man. He also grew up being part of a soccer team, which teaches you how to work together, how to take care of your teammates and be a part of a community.

**Philanthropic:** We were raised in an entrepreneurial household, and after grad school Ross created a business that also gave back. In addition to other charities, Good Wagon Books ironically supported libraries in jails to help give prisoners an opportunity to learn. Ross worked hard at this company and wanted it to succeed to continue to help the community.

**Humble:** My brother is a brilliant man, but you would never know it meeting him. He won scholarships to put himself through both undergrad and graduate school, in physics and material science. Yet Ross is down to earth and easy to talk to, never condescending to anyone. Again, he gets along with everyone. He's social and has many friends, all of whom vouch for his character and have stood by him through this ordeal.

**Frugal:** We were raised in a middle-class, safe, nice neighbourhood and home. We were taught to always pay your debts and never spend beyond your means. Once he left home, my brother wore the same clothes that were handed down from his older cousins for years. He cooked at home, his favorite dish being sausages with frozen veggies. He has always been happy with a simple life.

**Open-minded:** Ross is always open to hearing other points of view, another person's feelings and opinions. He truly listens and takes it in. He would express his viewpoint as well, but he was always respectful. It was

sure to be an enlightening discussion because Ross is so smart, yet open to hearing what other people have to say.

**Spiritual:** Ross has become more religious since his arrest. In the past, because he thinks scientifically, unless God's existence could be proven he expressed doubt, although was always respectful of others' religious beliefs. I believe this experience has humbled Ross. He now prays to God, asking for forgiveness, guidance and mercy. He is truly repentant.

My brother is a good man. His criminal convictions do not represent who Ross truly is. I respectfully and eagerly request that you give Ross the shortest sentence possible. Please leave him some time to live as a reformed man with his family and loved ones. Please allow him to come back to his family and be a part of our lives again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cally Ulbricht", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cally Ulbricht

# **LETTER 4**



March 29, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York, U S Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

My name is Travis Ulbricht, I am Ross Ulbricht's older brother. I am currently semi-retired from running a business in the information technology field, and live in Sacramento, California. I have known Ross his whole life, although we were raised apart as we have different mothers. I think I can speak to his character and give you an idea of who he is as a person.

I have known Ross to be a bright, curious, hardworking, family loving young man who more often than not put others before himself. He is also a thinker, giving much of his life to thinking about philosophical questions regarding the relationship of human beings with society and freedom in general. One was always assured a stimulating conversation when speaking with Ross. You were also always assured of being listened to and your ideas respected as well.

As Ross's older brother I had the opportunity to watch him make some impressive choices growing up. Ross followed our Dad in becoming an Eagle Scout. This is not an easy task for a teen while many of his peers were "partying." Instead Ross gave up much of that time to finishing what he had started and became an Eagle Scout before graduating high school.

Ross also was a gifted student, with a near perfect math score on the SAT. He was accepted at a good engineering program at UT Dallas with a full scholarship and eventually completed his Masters at Penn State.

Ross also did something I would not have imagined in college. At a young age he purchased a multi-bedroom home and spent a considerable time doing all the repairs necessary to then rent it to fellow students. In all my college years I can't recall anyone doing anything that "adult" and constructive.

While it's hard to sum up a person's life, there is something I heard about Ross that really "fits" who he truly is. Ross started up a yoga group in jail, to help ease the stress of his fellow inmates, and of himself as well. I had never heard of anyone ever doing that in jail. Jail is not a place where one wants to stand out. I believe Ross started the yoga group there because it was a bit of good that he could do in his surroundings and for the people around him.

That gesture of compassion is who my brother is. It is how he has been in most situations in his life. He is always looking for how he might improve the world and the lives of those around him, even if it's in a small way.

How you are known is often by the little things. The fires you don't stoke, the peace you make during upsets, the helping hand that wasn't asked for, the small kindnesses. While there are many things that I am proud of about Ross, it's not one specific thing that means the most to me. People like Ross add little things to every moment you're with them, which adds up to so much more. For instance, no one would have missed the yoga group if it hadn't been in the jail. But because it was, I imagine it helped a number of people who were hurting. That's who Ross is.

I have accepted that Ross will spend time in prison, and more important I know Ross has accepted it as well. When I think about what he faces I feel afraid for him. When I think of the men in prison they stand in stark contrast to who Ross is. Ross has no tattoos, no tear drops on his cheeks, no spider webs on his elbows. No scars given to him by anyone in anger, or by himself. Ross is not dark, brooding, violent or angry at the world. Ross has never been a cynic. He has no priors, so no recidivism. Rather, Ross is an idealist, a thinker, philosophically minded and peaceful. A lover of nature.

My hope for Ross is that the good he has in him to give the world is not torn from him during his experience in prison; that the parts that would seek truth, be curious and helpful would not be crushed into nonexistence. I hope that, after the punishment phase, he has the possibility of a future where his natural inclination to help could be of benefit. I have no doubt he would do what he could to help others if he were given a chance. That is simply who I know Ross to be.

The world is a rapidly changing place where so many things are digital and open. Much like children, people are exploring where the boundaries and cliffs are, what this new technological world means for our society. For many young people it's like finding fire for the first time and reaching out to touch it. Many will be burned. But they are young and not yet wise. Please your honor, take Ross' young age and youthful tendencies into account.

What I hope, and what I so humbly ask of you, is to please consider giving Ross a sentence that would give him a chance to still have a positive impact on the world in his future. It would be such a loss to not have his intelligence and light in the world.

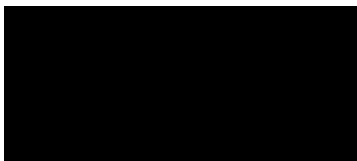
Thank you for your time and letting me express the love I have for my brother with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Ulbricht", with a stylized, cursive script.

Travis Ulbricht

## **LETTER 5**



The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am writing you on behalf of Ross Ulbricht who stood trial before you earlier this year. I attended much of the trial, traveling twice from Virginia, taking time off work (without pay) to do so. It was important to me that Ross saw support and didn't face trial alone.

I am a graphic artist and have worked with an educational company for over 15 years producing digital coursework for college aged students. I am also Ross's aunt and share a very close relationship with him, even considering him a second son. I've known Ross all his life. I pledged my life savings for his bail, something that would have been a hardship for me as a single mother. I would do it again without hesitation because of my strong belief in Ross.

While I understand Ross has been convicted of serious crimes, life is more complex than simple verdicts. These crimes do not reflect who he really is. Ross is a person who holds high standards and can be trusted more than the average person. He actually holds truth, and telling the truth, as an ideal and a challenge.

I have shared countless personal moments with Ross as well as seen him interact with others through all stages of his life. He has always been an exceptionally sweet, thoughtful and peaceful person. I can't remember seeing him lose his temper. As a young adult, he grew into someone I knew I could trust and count on. In fact, while I was going through some personal hardship in my life, I called on Ross to help me on more than one occasion. He offered me a place to stay more than once. He also helped me move during a scorching hot time in Austin. Ross was busy but knew I needed help and he cheerfully showed up, as I've seen him do so often for others. There were also a few months when he needed to a place to live and I welcomed him, without reservation, to live with me for as long as he needed. It was a fine and pleasant experience and I would do it again now, without hesitation.

I also have interacted with Ross in family and social contexts over the years, and he is always a positive contributor to any event. I have consistently been impressed with his outlook and determination to look towards the social good in a larger picture. An attitude like this isn't luck but is consciously cultivated, which isn't always easy. It is something we all aspire to. I still correspond, speak, and visit with Ross and see this attitude even now under such difficult conditions.

I realize youthful ideals can sometimes push serious boundaries and I believe this is what was behind Ross' actions. Fresh from graduate school, I know he was thinking about how he could impact the world for good. A lofty goal. Freedom coupled with his free market ideals interested him. He was very idealistic. I actually had vigorous debates with him about pure ideals vs. ideals within existing parameters, and I know he thought

about things carefully. However, youthful ideals don't always consider far reaching outcomes and consequences. This comes with time and maturity for most of us. I believe in another scenario Ross would have found this hard reality with less impactful consequences.

Despite the tragic, unforeseen consequences of Ross' actions, I know that these crimes do not reflect who Ross is. He made a terrible mistake, one that he would never repeat. Ross is contemplative and I know that this experience has caused reflection and change. Wherever Ross goes, in or out of prison, I am certain from my intimate and long experience with him, that Ross will not cause any problems, will be no danger to anyone and, as he has so often demonstrated, will contribute to others.

I am saddened by the turn Ross' life has taken, but in particular that there is so much good that will be lost to society in general, not only from him directly but the support he gives others. I only hope he can retain some of his desire to help others during this experience and not become hardened. That would be a loss for all of us. I know there are still many positive contributions that Ross can make.

Please consider Ross' peaceful nature and prior record when sentencing him. I respectfully ask for as short a sentence as possible—one that will allow this young man to return to and still contribute to society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kim LaCava". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

Kim LaCava



## **LETTER 6**

*Ann Becket*



March 10, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest:

I am writing you on behalf of my nephew, Ross William Ulbricht.

I have known Ross his entire life and he is one of the most outstanding young men it is my privilege to know. While I understand he has been convicted of several crimes, these do not represent who Ross really is or the positive things he is capable of achieving. The man I know possesses many fine qualities too often found in short supply these days. Ross is a humble, modest individual who is considerate of others and is deeply loyal and caring about his friends and family. The one quality that stands out the most is his integrity. I know Ross would never deliberately hurt or cheat another human being (or animal for that matter). An Eagle Scout, Ross internalized the virtues of honor, discipline and hard work at a young age and in a lifetime of knowing Ross, I have never heard him make a mean or disparaging remark about another person. Rather, Ross is a warm, funny, easy going and affectionate individual who doesn't have a selfish bone in his body.

You are probably unaware that Ross has been tutoring other inmates while in prison. Even during the most difficult week of his life when, understandably, Ross might be preoccupied with his own troubles, Ross returned daily to his cell from his trial and tutored his cellmate who was studying for his GED.

One of his friends told me how, once, while out walking they passed a woman selling flowers. Ross stopped and bought a flower and then turned around and gave it to the flower seller. Confused, his friend asked Ross why he did such a thing. Ross replied, "People are always buying flowers *from* her, but I wonder how often someone buys a flower *for* her." That sums up perfectly the essence of my nephew.

Another friend related to me how Ross asked her to take a Valentine's Day present to the girlfriend of someone he had befriended in prison. She asked him why. Ross told her, "So that she knows there is someone who loves her." When Ross heard the verdict of the jury, his first response was to turn and comfort his family, whispering to us that he would be ok. Ross is an extraordinary individual who is

always thinking of and putting others first. As a prison guard at MDC Brooklyn told my sister during one of her weekly visits to Ross said, "I can't tell you how highly I think of your son."

I appeal to you to allow Ross to return to society, his family and community as soon as is possible. The fact that Ross spent a great deal of his adult life in the world of academic ideas and theories may have contributed to his naïve idealism. Ross has so much to contribute and could have a far greater and positive impact on society if he is spared a long sentence.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Becket". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a stylized "B".

Ann Becket

# **LETTER 7**

[REDACTED]

March 10 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge, Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse, 500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest:

I am the Marketing Principal in an Interior Architecture firm in New York. I am also Ross Ulbricht's aunt and have known him all his life. I wish to convey to you the nature of the man I have known since he was a baby.

The criminal conduct Ross has been convicted of does not represent who he is as a person, or the many outstanding things he is capable of achieving. One would be hard pressed to find a kinder, more gentle and compassionate soul than Ross. Although Ross has now been convicted of a crime, my faith in him remains as strong as when I pledged my life savings towards his bail.

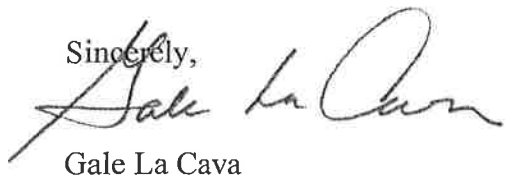
Particular and outstanding values that Ross embodies are integrity, honor and honesty. In addition to his relaxed and non-judgmental approach to life, this is a young man who embodies great sensitivity, fair play, and a gregarious nature filled with good humor. He is, and always has been, a sweet, considerate and funny guy with high ideals and love of life, family and friends. This is the Ross I know and have always known.

Ross is ever quick to make the first move in smoothing out difficulties – both in family squabbles or misunderstandings, and among peers and associates. As an example, I recall having an argument with Ross and his cousin. Both were in their twenties at the time, the perfect age for young men to think they know the answers to everything. We argued and ended the conversation with a slightly tense air. Within 15 minutes, Ross came up to me to apologize and admit his folly. It is a rare twenty year old who does that.

Ross is a man who embodies great potential for positive contribution to all who know him and society at large if he is spared a long sentence. I ask you to seriously consider the assessment of those of us who know Ross well, who have knowledge and experience of him, and consider it an honor to call him family and friend.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gale La Cava

# **LETTER 8**



March 27, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am writing as a friend of Ross Ulbricht. I have known Ross for nearly 20 years through middle school, high school, and in our adult lives. I consider him to be one of my oldest and closest friends. In that time I have known him to be a kind, forthright, generous and caring person.

Ross and I have travelled together, gone backpacking, and he even organized my surprise bachelor party when I got married three years ago. Ross is someone whom I call a dear friend. I gave testimony to this effect as a character witness on Ross's behalf during his trial in February.

When we were 18, Ross and I and another friend went to Big Bend National Park on a backpacking trip. Ross was our cross-country navigator and despite dehydration, harsh conditions, and long miles, he persevered and managed to find a safe route for us across a long stretch of desert. On this trip, and other adventures since, Ross has been a dedicated, honest, caring companion and I will always be proud to call him my friend.

A little about myself: I am 30 years old, and have been married for three years. My wife and I just had our first child. We live in Austin, Texas where we recently purchased our first home. I have worked for the City of Austin for seven years as a GIS Analyst. My wife teaches at a university near Austin. My wife and I are in all regards typical, ordinary, law-abiding people. I stress this point because I want to make clear that I have respect for the rule of law and due process.

I am familiar with the charges that were brought against Ross, and I am aware that he was found guilty by the jury. I understand that these are very serious charges, however I believe that a sentence that would allow Ross to return to his family and his community as soon as possible is most appropriate in this case. Ross does not have a previous history of criminal behavior. As a consistently peaceful and non-violent person, I feel that Ross does not pose a threat to the public, and that the likelihood of his committing any criminal acts in the future is nonexistent. Additionally, I feel that a long sentence would do grievous harm to Ross via the

demoralizing and dehumanizing effects of prison, and that in this case, given the lack of prior criminal history, this punishment is not the best course.

Please consider the full circumstances of Ross's life and situation when assessing the sentence in this case. Please consider that Ross is well loved by his community and family, and that in my opinion his probability of recidivism is zero.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Daniel Davis





# LETTER 9

March 25, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am Ross Ulbricht's aunt. I have known Ross since he was born. I am writing this letter to give you insight into Ross as a human being and shed light on his true nature.

Ross grew up in a loving family, raised by parents who instilled in him high morals and values – qualities that shaped who he fundamentally is, an honorable, kind and caring person. I trust Ross completely. So much so that my husband and I pledged our house toward his bail. I would never have considered jeopardizing the roof over our heads if I didn't think Ross was completely trustworthy. I am aware that Ross has been convicted of crimes, but he is fundamentally honest, peaceful and a danger to no one.

Rather, Ross is an outstanding person, gentle and compassionate. He has a deep love for family and friends. He is a ~~person~~ one can count on in time of need. He is a fun loving, happy go lucky person who loves life. All those who have ~~had the~~ good fortune to know Ross, have been positively touched by him.

One example of Ross' compassion and caring occurred a few years ago when our family had a reunion in Cape Code, MA. I flew in from California with my daughter Ava, who at the time was 9 years old, much younger than her adult cousins. The age difference caused her to feel left out, so Ava was spending most of her time alone in her room not participating with the others.

Ross became aware of this and went out of his way to spend time with Ava and help her feel comfortable. He made it a point to get to know her. He took her sailing and swimming and Ava was thrilled to have the attention. It warmed my heart to see Ross take this time with his much younger cousin and make the extra effort while her other cousins were too busy. Ross is known for his big heart, and this is just one example. Not all young men are sensitive enough to take the time to make their younger cousin feel part of the group. It was wonderful to see and just one of many times Ross has demonstrated sensitivity and compassion toward others.

I ask when you are considering Ross's sentence to take into account his outstanding character. He still has so much to give. Even with the shortest possible sentence, Ross will be severely punished. Please give him the chance to have some life at the end of that time.


Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leigh LaCava".

Leigh LaCava

# **LETTER 10**



March 23, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am Ross Ulbricht's first cousin and I write to share with you some thoughts on Ross from the perspective of someone who has known him for his entire life. In fact, I was there on the day of his birth and I still remember it vividly, despite only being four at the time. Since then it has been my privilege to spend many other days with Ross doing everything from hiking to skiing to playing board games and engaging in countless other activities that I look back on so fondly. In fact, every memory that I have of Ross is accented by the fact that he has a spark; a passion for life and an adventurous spirit.

Ross is undeniably a man of exemplary character. I have known this all his life, but am reminded of it by a simple act of kindness that Ross demonstrated in May, 2013. After an event, he, I and our cousins found ourselves trapped under an awning in the midst of an extreme downpour. We assumed we would be stranded for a considerable time, lest we become thoroughly soaked. As the driver, I felt a sense of obligation to rescue us by making a dash for the car, but given our distance I opted for the relative dryness of our existing location. I sensed that I was disappointing the group, but I also wasn't prepared to be drenched. Without hesitation or prompting, Ross requested the keys and simply strolled out into the tempest.

Not one other person took it upon himself to sacrifice his comfort. So, if it is truly the little things that define a man's character, then it is clear that Ross is among a rare class of people who value others more than themselves.


What truly makes Ross an astonishing person is the fact that he has an abundance of compassion. Again in May 2013 we spent an evening engaged in a rather deep, philosophical conversation that stretched late into the night. I remember asking Ross what he thought the purpose of life was. Specifically, I asked what he would do with his time if money was no object. I was struck—although perhaps I should not have been given what I know of his character—that his response was completely consistent with how he was already living his life. He expressed that money is "useful" because it affords resources and with those resources you can achieve amazing things to help

further the greater good. Useful... I remember his choice of the word distinctly because there was a tone in his voice that made it clear that money is ultimately inconsequential. All that Ross cared about was how his life might be used to serve humanity.

And that question—the question of how Ross will be able to use his life to serve humanity—is one that you are in a unique position to answer. I believe that Ross' crime is not a reflection of his true character, but rather the result of ignorance and idealism. Ross has an astounding intellect and a warm heart and that heart has been profoundly humbled by what I can only describe as a tragic series of choices that have real-life consequences. I know that he is deeply sorry, not only for his actions, but for the hurt that this has caused his loved ones and for the opportunity cost of a lifetime that I'm sure he fears is at risk of being wasted.

When determining Ross' sentence, I humbly implore you to consider what I, and I'm sure many others, have shared. I offer no excuse for his crimes, but I know unequivocally that humanity will be better served by a man like Ross being free than it would by his being behind bars. I ask that you would extend Ross the compassion that I have witnessed in him so many times and impose a sentence that ultimately allows him to return to society.

Sincerely,



Logan Becket



# **LETTER 11**

[REDACTED]

March 8, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

My name is Thomas Haney. I met you briefly at Ross Ulbricht's trial about a month ago when I spoke about his character. I work summers in Montana as a U.S. Forest Service Smokejumper, and winters in Virginia in oyster and clam aquaculture.

I'm writing you today on behalf of my friend Ross, to ask that you be as lenient as possible with his sentencing. I've known Ross since we were in high school, and have had many great experiences with him over the years. During our friendship I've always been struck by his kindness, openness, intelligence, and general love of life. Ross is absolutely one of the most unique people I've met, and is someone who I strongly believe deserves leniency.

The entire time I've known Ross he has been a positive and uplifting presence and influence on the people around him, and I'm sure he will continue to be so wherever he finds himself. I can think of several times when something in life was really bothering me, and though I didn't feel comfortable talking about it with many of the people closest to me, I could always talk to Ross. This is because I knew without a doubt that I could trust him, and that he always wanted the best for me.

Please leave open the possibility that Ross can live life freely again, because freedom and life were two things that were never wasted on him.

Thanks for your time,

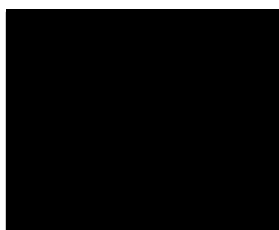
Thomas Haney

[REDACTED]



## **LETTER 12**





21 March 2015

The Honourable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest

My name is Vicky Cheevers and I am a marketing professional based in the UK. I write with regards to Ross Ulbricht.

I have known Ross since January 2012 - we were introduced via a good friend of mine - his sister, Cally - at a house party in Bondi, Sydney.

I immediately formed a friendship with Ross, which later transferred to becoming Facebook friends (I moved back to the UK).

He is a kind, gentle person, who is easy to talk to and I have never heard him say a bad word against anybody, not even on his Facebook profile! He is unassuming and doesn't like to get involved in or provoke conflict. He is highly intelligent, often using his intelligence to help people and society in general, as demonstrated by his scientific ability. He goes out of his way to help people, no matter how small the task. This sounds like a very small thing but it is just one of many examples of his selfless nature - at a BBQ we had, he was first to offer to stand all day cooking people's food even though we were all having fun, despite the scorching hot weather! He put us before himself. As I say, small, but a great demonstration of his selflessness.

I appreciate that he has been convicted of a crime, however I do ask that he be given as short a sentence as possible to allow a genuinely good person back into society.

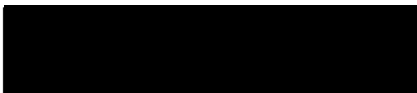
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Cheevers', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vicky Cheevers



# **LETTER 13**



March 1, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
U.S. District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl St.  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

My name is John Charles Miller. I am a retired real estate investor.

I have known Ross Ulbricht and his family since the 1990's. We are part-time neighbors in a small community in Costa Rica.

Ross has always been a well-mannered, soft spoken, likable individual. He never created any sort of upsets or commotion in the area. He has been a trouble-free, well behaved young man and a good student.

I understand that Ross has been convicted of a crime. I hope that in his sentencing you can give him as short a sentence as possible. I believe that, with a future out of prison, Ross could achieve many positive actions and deeds for society in general, and specifically his community.

Sincerely yours,

  
John Charles Miller

# **LETTER 14**

██████████

April 6, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
 United States District Judge  
 Southern District of New York  
 United States Courthouse  
 500 Pearl Street  
 New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

Please accept this character testimonial for Ross William Ulbricht in advance of his upcoming sentencing. My objective is to contribute an account of Ross that did not come through at trial and has been absent from the predominant media narrative. While I am private by nature, my motivation in sharing the following anecdotes is to aid in distinguishing the character of Ross from the classic archetypal images that accompany the criminal conduct of which he is convicted.

First, I would like to preface this letter by acknowledging that as a ██████████ ph.D. student in ██████████ Psychology, I am keenly aware that there is no objective answer to the question of “*who*” somebody is. In research this problem is mitigated by obtaining reports from multiple relational sources, ideally individuals that have observed the actions of the target individual across various scenarios, moods, exchanges, and contexts. In clinical interviews this problem is mitigated by eliciting behavioral anecdotes and examples to substantiate verbal reports. With this in mind, my aim is to offer a description of Ross’ character drawing from my vantage points as a dating partner (late Spring 2012-late Summer, 2012) and a platonic friend (Fall, 2012 – Present), and I will strive to substantiate my claims by drawing on examples, including excerpts from past written correspondence.

One of the more succinct illustrations of Ross’ character and values comes from an email exchange that he initiated shortly after his move from TX to CA. I include both sides of our exchange because one’s character is reflected both by virtue of the qualities that *they* value in the people they choose to spend their free time with, as well as by the assessments and impressions that *others* (me) have about their time together (which by late July and August, constituted a near daily basis):

*“Dear ██████████, [...] There are a couple of things unspoken that should be. For one, you are an amazing person. I was continually impressed by you over the summer. I have not encountered a mind quite like yours before. Your intelligence is refreshing and inspiring. You showed kindness, humility and respect to me in all of our interactions. There was literally ZERO drama between us. [...] I felt we could have worked out any dispute that might’ve arose, mostly because you are so rational and open minded. Additionally, I think you are gorgeous! [...] When you laugh, your face lights up and I can’t help but laugh myself. [...] So yes ██████████, I miss you. Whatever the future holds, I want to be your friend, ok? I don’t want to lose touch. [...] When I’m in Austin, I want to see you. [...]”*

*“Ross, [...] At the risk of sounding unoriginal, I was continually impressed by you over the summer as well. Initially I was very cautious - as you picked up on with our “5 first dates” :) but the more time we spent together and the more I got to know the real you, I was able to see that in addition to the characteristics that initially drew me to you (including superior intellect), you have a [genuine heart]. And you also have an exceptional sense of humor - I still think about some of your morning comedy and can’t help but smile [...] I was also impressed by your intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness. I think very few people would have actually read the articles I sent you, or so readily watched the TED talks and YouTube videos I recommended. And likewise, I think few people would have shared their [research] with me - especially knowing that I don’t have a background in their area of study[ ...]*

*As far as maintaining a friendship, I have a bit of a relevant story [...] Ultimately I decided that the value of continuing to spend time together and getting to know you further, outweighed the discomfort that accompanies losing somebody romantically [...] And really, the most influential factor in this decision was whether I would value a friendship with you - if so, it would be particularly short-sited, and immature, to just stop seeing you for the duration of your time in Austin. So [...] yes, I do want to stay in touch and be your friend - I have known this for a while :)”*

In addition to positive feedback, I also value Ross for his willingness to provide constructive feedback. For example, on one occasion I made a tangential reference to downplaying my true enthusiasm for a particular subject matter, to which he addressed, *"I encourage you to express your enthusiasm. More often than not, it 'gives people permission' to do the same and will attract supportive people to you."* On another occasion when I explicitly asked for candid feedback he responded, *"Just my perspective, as you know, but I would say you are very reserved [...] Try going for what you want without over analyzing how to get there. Try also speaking without thinking. This has to do with trusting yourself and being willing to make a fool of yourself for the sake of learning how to express yourself."* / *"Ya know, I became much more careful with my words in grad school. With all of the jargon and status around being smart, there was social pressure to be that way."*

As referenced above, Ross has an enthusiastic and contagious intellectual curiosity. One example of this is nicely illustrated by his response to a TED talk I recommended: *"That was a great one! Thanks for sending it my way. It's so true that you stop learning/growing when you get committed to the I'm right, you are wrong paradigm, or even the I'm wrong you're right. Either way it shuts off the mind. In my pursuit of moral truth over the years, I have progressed by finding inconsistencies in my views, and then seeking a deeper understanding that might prove one right and the other wrong, or both wrong or right. The idea is that two inconsistent things cannot both be true. Either one or both are wrong, or your view of them is. And it never ends, and it is ever fascinating :)"*

Finally, Ross demonstrated empathy, particularly for his family. He spoke often, and uniformly fondly, of his mom, dad, and sister. Additionally, Ross exhibited concern about the well-being of one aunt in particular, whose son was diagnosed with a severe medical condition. From time to time Ross would share some of the challenges faced by his cousin and aunt, and ask my opinion about various support options and community resources. Ross was in close communication with both his aunt and cousin hoping to help alleviate some of the palpable stress that he perceived his aunt was experiencing in her role as primary caretaker. Ross appeared to contribute a valuable role in his cousin's life as his cousin was able to hear Ross in a way that a parent, simply by virtue of their role as primary caregiver, sometimes can not get through.

In closing, on a more somber note, *nightmare* does not begin to aptly characterize Ross' situation, because unlike a nightmare, the nature of this horror, to include the loss of hopes and dreams, extends well beyond Ross. Moreover to be frank, unlike a nightmare, there is the distinct possibility that Ross' parents – who have never been alleged of any wrongdoing; *we truly could be in their shoes* – will not live to wake up from their living nightmare. This reality is deeply disturbing. This is also true of his extended family, many friends, and society as a whole as Ross has the capacity to go on to make many valuable contributions to society.

Therefore it is my hope, Your Honor, that you might consider a sentence that allows Ross to return to society within a time frame that will allow him to play a positive role in his family, community and society.

Sincerely,




# **LETTER 15**

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

My Name is Jeff Crandell, I am Ross Ulbricht's Uncle and I currently live in Los Angeles, CA. I am aware Ross has been convicted of a crime and is about to be sentenced. I have known Ross his entire life and feel his incarceration is unjust. He is a good kind person.

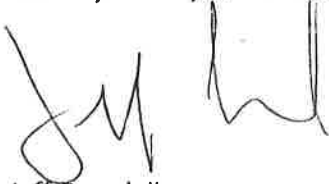
Ross loves his family and friends and has always cared for and looked out for my daughter Ava his younger cousin.

Ross also has a tremendous intellect and strong belief in his fellow man. I know he has learned a great lesson. Given his true character and freedom, Ross will contribute to the betterment our world as few others could – I have no doubt.

I ask when you are considering Ross's sentence, to take into account Ross's true nature. In spite of his conviction, to keep Ross behind bars longer than required would be a terrible waste.

Your honor, I ask you please for leniency in your sentencing of my nephew Ross Ulbricht.

Thank you for your consideration and God Bless.



Jeff Crandell



# **LETTER 16**



April 3, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I'm writing on behalf of my friend Ross Ulbricht. Ross has been a friend of mine since we were sixteen. We met at Westlake High School in Austin, Texas, where we were in a close group of friends that would spend time together in and away from school. In high school we saw each other almost every weekend and would chat and have lunch together almost every day at school. Our friendship has held up over time, due to Ross' outgoing and caring nature. We both moved away after high school, but always called each other when back in Austin to get together to share new stories and reminisce. In 2012, he sublet our apartment after we purchased our first home and I was delighted to have such a responsible, loyal friend in the space. I trust Ross.

I am a practicing Landscape Architect and new mom to a beautiful fifteen month old girl named Hannah. While Ross was still in Austin we would often get together for food and good conversation. I'm sad that Ross has been convicted of a crime, and because of such, has not been able to come back for a visit. I am deeply saddened that he may not be able to visit for years to come and hope for the shortest possible sentence for him. I so wish that he could come over to our house and hang out with our daughter while we cook for him. He is so full of energy, life and love that I wish I could expose my daughter to. She would be delighted in his presence. I also feel that he would be able to pass on great wisdom to her as an 'uncle' figure. He is so intellectual, patient and articulate in explaining the complexities of this world.

During our senior year Ross accompanied me to the high school prom. I was dating a guy from another school who was in a wheel chair at the time. My boyfriend did not want to go to the dance with me, because he was embarrassed to be in the wheel chair and thought he would slow our group of friends down. No amount of convincing changed his mind and I thought that I would not have a chance to go to prom. Ross stepped in, being very good friends with both of us, and offered to be my date. He enabled me to have the only prom experience I ever had, while being a non-threatening alternative for my boyfriend. Had it been anybody else, I'm sure that my boyfriend would have uneasy about motives. Not with Ross. He trusted him to be my date for the night and my friend without compromising our relationship. Ross is trustworthy and loyal to his friends.

Ross glows. When you're with him, you feel uplifted and alive. He has a great way of living in the moment and recognizing the preciousness of the ordinary. He opens your eyes up to see things a little bit clearer and inspires to dig deeper. I hope his beautiful gift of living in the moment has not turned into a curse for him, given his current circumstance. I hope that he is able to return to society as soon as possible, so that he is able to share his gifts with his friends and family again. I sincerely hope that my daughter has a chance to meet him and to learn from him. I hope for his health and wellbeing. Ross is a playful, delightful, and kind soul. I am shocked by the convictions that he faces and just can't believe that the Ross I know and grew up with is capable of such crimes. He is a good person and is capable of sharing so much positivity in this world.

I miss Ross and hope that he knows how loved he is. I hope to see my friend again soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Allison Cassel".

Allison Cassel (formerly Wait)



# **LETTER 17**

[REDACTED]

March 31, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse, 500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I have written you in regards to my good friend, Ross Ulbricht. My name is Curtis Francis Rodgers Jr. and I work as a technology and process improvement specialist for McCarthy Construction in San Francisco. I live with my girlfriend of five years, and we're both from Austin, Texas.

Ross Ulbricht and I are good friends; we have known each other since we attended high school together in Austin. Ross and I have been close friends for about six years, having spent time together in Texas and California on average once a month, and sometimes multiple times a week. We would typically visit the park to throw a Frisbee and talk about our lives, relationships, work, and current events.

I understand that Ross has been convicted of serious crimes. I know Ross well, and the crimes he has been convicted of do not change my high opinion of my close friend. Ross' criminal convictions are not a representation of Ross' character, considering my close experiences with him. I regard Ross so highly that I flew across the country in order to testify at trial if needed on his excellent character and peaceful nature.

Over the years, Ross has proven to be a kind, trustworthy person who I have relied upon on numerous occasions. When I first moved to San Francisco, Ross offered me a place to sleep while I found an apartment and even let me wash my clothes in his apartment instead of walking up the steep hill to a laundromat. Ross is the only friend of mine from high school that I kept in regular contact with, and the only friend from Austin who came up to Dallas to visit me after I started my career in construction. I can't recall a single argument between us; it just seemed we enjoyed each other's company and had genuine interest in each other's success.

I think Ross' experience as a material science researcher, and entrepreneur with his Good Wagon Books venture illustrate his capacity to have a positive impact on our society. I implore you to sentence Ross to as short a sentence as possible.

Sincerely,

  
Curtis Rodgers

[REDACTED]

# **LETTER 18**



April 27, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I am an agent at the Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles, CA, the leading talent agency in the world that represents clients across film, TV, music, sports, and much more. I am writing you in regards to Ross Ulbricht and his sentencing.

Ross is my cousin. Our mothers are sisters and I've known him my whole life. We spent all our summers together growing up. The members of our family are loving, honest, and hardworking people.

I consider Ross one of those truly exceptional individuals who thinks about the greater good for all people. This should not be discounted when one considers how unusual a quality that is in the world today.

On a personal level, Ross is one of the most caring, honorable, and trustworthy people I know. He is sweet, humble, friendly, selfless and outgoing. He is also incredibly accomplished in academia, with multiple degrees in the sciences. My fondest memories of him are of surfing in Costa Rica and drawing comic books together.

I once told Ross he should have been an astronaut. I watched him consider the possibility and we both knew he had the means to do it. I can't say that about anyone else I've ever met. I have faith that time will reveal him as the man I know, with so many incredible qualities of character and such a big heart. In spite of everything, I believe Ross is an honorable and noble guy. That's the highest praise I can give and he deserves it. Ross cares about family, friends, and his country. He cares about good values and he cares about people. If we were all like Ross the world would be a much better place.

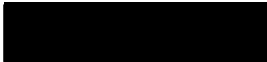
For these reasons, I can say that the crimes Ross is convicted of do not fit the person I know for one minute. Please give Ross the shortest possible sentence so his life is not wasted, so he can have a second chance to make a positive impact on his

community and the greater world. With all he is capable of contributing, it would be a terrible waste to have him spend a long sentence behind bars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Alex Becket', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Alex Becket





# **LETTER 19**

Catharine Becket



March 27, 2015

The Honorable Katherine B. Forrest  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Forrest,

I have known Ross Ulbricht, my step-cousin, his entire life.

I live in New York where I work as a Vice President at Sotheby's auction house. I would occasionally pass by the Brooklyn jail in which Ross is currently being held, and each time I do I am hit with both sadness and frustration. While I know he is serving as a positive light in the lives of his fellow inmates, he could be doing so much more for society as a free man. He is someone who truly contributes to the world around him and, as an incredibly compassionate person, he will no doubt check on the well-being of these inmates when he is released.

Ross is a remarkably gentle and positive person; he always puts others before himself. I have spoken with him when he has called from jail, and he always asks how we're doing before offering up some of the more pleasant details of his incarceration. He never complains, knowing this might add to his family's distress.

The last time I saw Ross was at my brother's wedding in 2012. There was a dinner held for out-of-townners and most of the guests were in their 20s and 30s. My mother and step-father, both in their 70s, were a bit out of their element. I went to go collect my dinner from the buffet and when I returned with my plate I had a look around for my parents, wanting to make sure they were well situated. I needn't have worried, however, because there was Ross, having a chat with them. I believe they were discussing World War II, one of my step-father's favourite topics. Ross, a handsome and affable young man who could have been chatting with any of the cute girls in attendance, chose to take the time to join my parents who had been sitting by themselves. Being thoughtful comes naturally to him.

While most people possess a modicum of self-preserving cynicism, Ross approaches people with optimism and an open-mind. If I ever had a concern for Ross it was that someone might take advantage of his good nature. He was born with a kind disposition, and through the guidance of his family he grew up to be man of integrity. The crimes of which he has been accused do not reflect the character of the Ross Ulbricht I have known for three decades. It would be a great tragedy and waste to have him kept away from society. I ask that you give him the shortest sentence possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I may be reached on [REDACTED]

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Catharine Becket', is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the left.

Catharine Becket